to give us an assessment of the overall effect of the "Operation Parakram" in our efforts to combat terrorism as also its influence on the international community?

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, when the Government of India decided to redeploy our troops, we made a statement officially that the objectives with which the mobilisation had taken place had been achieved. India had sent a clear message to Pakistan and to the international community that since we have to fight cross-border terrorism, we will be prepared to take any step that is necessary in order to succeed in this fight. I think that was the major objective which was acheived by the "Operation Parakram", and when we said that we had acheived this obejctive, this is what we meant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Bangladesh's Statement regarding withdrawal of Water Upstream by India

*43. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bangladesh, in an indirect reference, has blamed India for degrading its vast areas and land and worsening poverty by withdrawal of water upstream; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) According to Bangladesh media reports, at the Asia-Pacific Consultation Workshop on Water and Poverty, Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh had stated that unilateral intervention at the upper riparian region in the flows of common rivers worsens poverty situation of lower-riparian country like Bangladesh because water is very important for an agrarian economy.

(b) India and Bangladesh have been actively cooperating and interacting on all issues including those relating to sharing of waters of

the common rivers. This is effected through various high level mechanisms such as the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission and the various Committees that report to the Joint Rivers Commission. The Government of India is committed to strengthening and deepening its cooperation with Bangladesh to the mutual benefit of the people of both the countries.

India and Bangladesh had signed the Treaty on Sharing of the Ganges Waters at Farakka in Decemeber 1996. The Treaty is working well. The Treaty is for 30 years, with a provision for mandatory reviews after every five years. Accordingly, the first such mandatory review became due in December 2001.

Atrocities on Bangladeshi Hindus

†*45. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a team consisting of members of Senate/ Congress was sent to Bangladesh by America to investigate the atrocities being committed on minorities (Hindus) there;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the efforts made by Government so far, to protect the Hindu community in Bangladesh; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The Government is not in a position to comment on the visit of a team consisting of members of Senate/Congress to Bangladesh from America to investigate atrocities being committed on minorities (Hindus) in Bangladesh. However, the Government has been concerned at the reports of atrocities on minorities and has taken it up regularly with the Government of Bangladesh.

(c) and (d) There were reports of some attacks on temples and puja mandaps during the recent Durga Puja festival in Bangladesh. Following the attacks, Government of Bangladesh had issued instructions for providing special security including deployment of Bangladesh Rifles to ensure peaceful celebrations of Durga Puja. The Home Minister and other senior leaders also publicly reassured the minorities of the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.